

## SWIMMING IN HYDE PARK.

A Funny Sight That Queen Victoria Just Missed.

The Most Popular Bathing Place in the World Is Within a Stone's Throw of Rotten Row—Six Hundred Londoners in the Water at Once.

[Copyright, 1890.]  
[Special Correspondence.]

When her gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria, drove through Hyde Park at 7:15 p. m. the other evening, she was just a few minutes too early to witness one of the most interesting sights offered by her Empire upon which the sun never sets.

The Queen had been at a garden party at Marlborough House, the Prince of Wales' town residence, and was returning to take the train for Windsor. With her were her granddaughters, the children of dead Emperor Frederick, of Germany, tall, plain girls sitting bolt upright in the carriage seat. The funny figure of the Queen looked a head shorter. Before trotted a jangling troop of life guards in their shining armor. Behind, a few mounted policemen kept the ruck of carriages which followed from coming too close to the



AFTER THEIR BATH.

royal turnout. A few of the bystanders raised their hats, but I heard none of the cheers which were reported in the Court Circular next morning.

The little procession passed along the north shore of the Serpentine, as the Hyde Park pond is called. When it had vanished in a cloud of dust a half dozen ragged boys with towels on their arms who had run over the bridge from the south bank to see the sight ran back again much faster, to be in time for the evening swim. When I followed to the south bank there were a thousand people of all ages, but mostly boys, loitering on the grass or "trying" the water and exulting in its warmth, or besieging the bystanders for the "excess time."

Hyde Park is the center of London. It contains the Rotten Row and the great drive where everybody congregates in the season to show his fine turnout or envy his neighbor's. That's at three o'clock. At 7:30 precisely in summer and at five in winter, Sunday evenings alone excepted, the Serpentine is the most popular bathing resort in the world. I saw it at its best, a few minutes after the Queen's carriage had gone by.

When the big clock at Westminster tolled out the half hour, at once along a curving line of beach measuring perhaps an eighth of a mile, clothes were stripped off in a jiffy, and in five minutes six or seven hundred men and boys were paddling in the water. The space



A GROUP OF HYDE PARK SWIMMERS.

reserved for them was marked off on the beach by a railing, and the soldiers out for an evening stroll with their best girls modestly passed behind the railing.

The swimmers were forbidden by placard to approach nearer than fifty feet to the north shore, where the belated carriages still rolled by. Three or four boatmen lay to their oars off in the stream to enforce the rule and rescue any swimmer whose strength might fail. Within the boundaries there was a splashing of water, a gleaming of white hared limbs, a running of races and playing of pranks that were worth going a good distance to see. There were some splendid swimmers—men all the way from twenty years up to fifty, but fully three-fourths of the number were boys. A few formed an exception to the rule of nakedness by wearing trunks, but they were very few.

On the shore were heaps of clothing. I realized where Disraeli got his famous phrase about catching the Liberals in bathing and running off with their clothes. Some of the bathers had provided against such a catastrophe by deputing one of the group, usually the smallest and feeblest, and always against his fearful protests, to watch the clothes of the others. In most cases this excess of caution was avoided. Indeed it seemed unnecessary, for there was a bobby in blue clothes and a bored expression of countenance on the beach,



A RACE ON THE GREEN.

and he disentangled the combatants whenever a number of boys began fighting for the possession of the most advantageous shirt or the trousers with the fewest rents. I tried to ascertain the cause of the officer's enmity.

"Well, sir," he said, "they bathe here every day, morning and evening. In the morning it's mostly men, and in the evening mostly boys, but it's always just like this."

"What! Doesn't the weather make

any difference? Is it as lively in winter?"

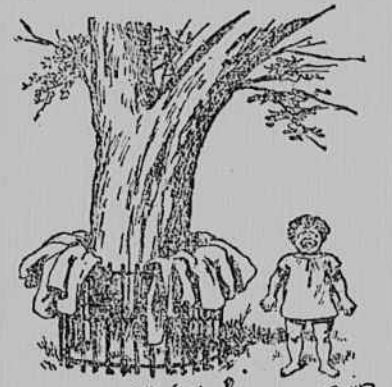
"Very nearly. Perhaps there aren't quite as many, but there are a good many who come here regular every day all the year round. Ill there! Get on this side of the railing," he shouted to a couple of lads who were running a race off across the park clad in Adam's buff.

Shades of Sir John Franklin and shadow of the North Pole! An English summer is cold enough. Imagine bathing in Hyde Park in January! Perhaps it's no worse than the Potomac where President Adams used to take his morning dip winter and summer.

After half an hour or so of splashing the older bathers began to dress, and the younger ones to run races among the great trees of hundreds of years' growth, yews, some of them, whose gnarled stumps bear only the slightest fringe of green. The bystanders have a way of administering encouragement to the rear-most runner with a wet towel which is very conducive to speed. One poor fellow I noticed, though he could swim well enough, did not try the running. One sound leg and a crutch were his means of locomotion.

On the grass at the edge of the beach sat a boy of five, patient and motionless, except a continual shivering, which testified to the coolness of the London evening air, even in July. He was one of those big-headed, grave-eyed, little-bodied fellows who grow in cities and who oftenest die early. By and by one of the skylarkers came to where he was and began wiping him with a towel not untidily, and putting on his ragged clothes. I had noticed the same big brother before trying to teach the child to swim. There were plenty of other boys as young and small as this one, but none quite so helpless, though perhaps a dozen required some help in the adjustment of their rags. Not that all were rags. Some of the full-grown youths had clothes good enough for a President or a Prince of Wales.

All things have an end, and Hyde Park bathing is *malum prohibitum*, if not *malum per se*, after 8:30 p. m. By and by the last shoe was pulled on, the last coat adjusted, and the motley regiment began to file out of the park as quietly as it had come. Some wore their towels like regalia of honor, others rolled them



WATCHING THE CLOTHES.

into parcels and covered them with brown paper, others, and they the majority, had none. Some turned to the far East end for their homes, others lived nearer at hand, in Chelsea or Fulham or Hammersmith, and these reached their beds while those farther housed were still plodding their way under the blinking lamps, while the crowds in the Strand were pouring out of the theaters, for an entr' act, drink and cigar, and just as the Queen's special train was slowing up at her private station at Windsor.

JOHN L. HEATON.

## How to Cook Onions.

Although onions are not popular, yet they are healthful when properly cooked, and contain valuable medical properties. Perhaps nothing in the way of food is better for a cold than cooked onions, or for the ear ache than a roasted onion applied to the seat of pain as hot as it can be borne. They are also said to be a specific for sleeplessness, induced by over-exertion. They should be eaten raw just before going to bed. The white-skin variety are the mildest, and when boiled in salted water until perfectly tender, and then drained until dry, with butter and a little sweet cream added to them, are perfectly harmless to the weakest stomach.

Escalloped onions are prepared by boiling them in salted water until tender, then drained and put into a deep dish. A white sauce with which to cover them is made by putting a tablespoonful of butter in a saucepan, and adding to it one tablespoonful of flour; after being stirred well together, a cupful of sweet milk is added, stirring until well blended together. This is turned over the onions, little bits of butter and cracker crumbs are added, then baked in the oven until a nice brown.

The old-time dish of fried onions is prepared in the following manner: Fry several slices of pork until crisp; take the slices up, add to the gravy a quantity of sliced onions, a little salt and pepper, then cover closely and cook until done, stirring occasionally.

To pickle onions, select a small white variety, remove the skins, scald in salted water until scalded through, after which place them in good cider vinegar. If a mixed pickle is desired, cauliflower, green tomatoes or cucumbers, with spices, can be added.—Country Gentleman.

## Charges According to Diagnosis.

Piltaker—Twenty dollars! Too much, doctor, altogether too much. Why, it was only a headache.

Dr. Pillgriver—I know it, but I diagnosed the case as incipient brain fever. My bills are made out according to my own judgment.—Texas Siftings.

## A Colored Cynic.

Matilda Snowball—I say, Uncle Neco, what does yer think ob my new foring suit?

Uncle Neco—Folks what puts in all de clothes dey kin git puts me in mind of a sweet pertyer patch dat's all go' ter rine.—Texas Siftings.

## A DRUMMER'S TRICK.

How He Manages to Appear Liberal Without Going to Any Expense.

A drummer for a large wholesale clothing house has a trick which he says saves him a great deal of money. He has to go around with retailers in small country towns a great deal. He finds that an amount of display and extravagance is necessary in order to convince them of the standing and generous dealing of his house. This used to cost him a great deal of money in traveling expenses. He was expected to bear a great part of the expense of entertaining the men to whom he sold goods; he had to buy them drinks and cigars and take them around. In the course of this he had to drink a good deal himself. He noticed that it was not so much the amount of money that he spent, but the show that he made with it which impressed them, and that it was more important to seem careless and generous than really to spend a great deal of money.

One night he was with some retail clothiers and their friends drinking. He had several small bills in his pocket. He had been drinking a good deal himself, and in a reckless way pulled out a bill and lit a cigar with it. Without thinking he put out the light and stuck the burned remnant in his waistcoat pocket. He noticed how it impressed the men with whom he was. The bill did not amount to any more than the price of a round of drinks or cigars, but it made the eyes of his customers open to think that a man should use money in such a reckless way. The next day, when he sobered up, he found the burned bill in his pocket only one end of which had burned. He thought he had made a fool of himself by throwing away good money. The idea occurred to him, however, that possibly he could take the bill around to the sub-treasury and get a new bill for it. So the next time he was in town he took the burned bill to the sub-treasury, where it was readily exchanged for a new one. The bill had not been destroyed; it was plain what its denomination, number and issue were, and he had no trouble in having it replaced.

The idea became strong in his mind that he might do this ostentatious and reckless act without having to pay for it. So the next time he was out with several of his customers he bought a few rounds of drinks, and then began in a reckless and careless way to burn up one and two dollar bills. He took pains to put the bills back in his pocket, and not to burn up enough of any one bill to destroy its redeemable qualities. He also told his customers extravagant stories about the percentage his house was paying him, how cheap it was selling, and what liberal concessions he was making to get rid of the stock which his house had on hand. He found the trick worked excellently. He has been trying it on ever since to a greater or less extent.

One night he held a card party of some of his customers at his rooms at the hotel, and thinking that possibly they might notice that he immediately put the bills out and put them back in his pocket, he used dollar bills for lighters during the whole evening and then threw them in a cuspidor which he kept by his chair, first putting them out before he threw them in, so that they might not be burned up there. After his customers left he took the top off the cuspidor, took the bills out, folded them all up and redeemed them when he next returned to New York. He has gained the reputation of being one of the most careless and extravagant men on the road, without it costing him as much for expenses with his customers as it costs other salesmen who do not burn up their money.—N. Y. Sun.

## JUST WHAT MUFTI IS.

Anybody Can Buy It, But Nobody But a Warrior Can Wear It.

What does "muffi" mean? Is it an Americanism, an Anglicism, a Gallicism, or pure, unadulterated slang? In the days of spelling and definition books, fifteen years ago, it would have been selected as a good word to torture aspirants for prizes.

Briefly expressed, muffi is a military term largely used in Europe and in a less degree in this country for the use of civil dress or plain clothes by a regular military or naval officer entitled to wear uniforms at all times, as was actually done by officers in the army or navy of the great nations up to the close of the last century.

In the present day there seems to be such a burning desire on the part of officers in the army and navy of the United States to get rid of the evidences of their presumably honorable calling that the wearing of muffi, or plain clothes, is an almost universal practice. Whether it is for the good of the country that the objection to wearing uniforms on the streets, outside of parades or public processions, is extending to the non-commissioned officers and privates of the regular service, is a question that is just now receiving considerable attention from thoughtful citizens.

Turning for a moment to the philological issue involved in the word "muffi," it appears that the term is of Hindoostani origin, and was adopted into the Hindoostani tongue to express the assumption of plain clothes by the officers in the service of the old East India Company, which was a commercial corporation invested with military powers. In the original Arabic "muffi" indicated a person, not a thing, namely, a doctor or teacher of religions or Mohammedan law, which is its present primary interpretation in Turkey. The French speak of an officer "in muffi" as "en Pekin," thus again recognizing the Oriental origin of the word. The Germans use "muffi" to express the assumption of civilian clothes after being in uniform, and the Russians recognize the term in the same sense.—San Francisco Chronicle.

## Selecting a Part.

Chicago Actress—I should like to have a part in your revival of "Cinderella."

Theatrical Manager—Do you think you can play the part of Cinderella?

Chicago Actress—No, but I'd do beautifully as one of the sisters whom Cinderella's shoes wouldn't fit.—N. Y. Weekly.

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